

The Evil Nature of Rebellious Principles and Practices, and the Fatal Consequences of them.

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SERMON

Preach'd

On the 30th of January 17 ^{$\frac{15}{16}$} .

Being the FAST for the

Martyrdom of King CHARLES I.
of Blessed Memory.

By JOHN TAYLOR M. A. Vicar of
Lamborne in Berks. *K.*


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Prov. XXIV. 21.

And meddle not with them that are given to change.

THE Author of this Book of Proverbs was no less a Person than *Solomon* the Son of *David*, King of *Israel*, one who was not only distinguish'd from his fellow Creatures, and advanc'd above them by his Royal Dignity and Grandeur, being the Lord's appointed, and his Sacred Vicegerent upon Earth, but he excell'd all others in the Greatness of his Understanding and Wisdom. The many admirable Precepts, and Rules of Life, which he has deliver'd to us in this Book are a very great Testimony and Confirmation of it: and the Holy Spirit in other Places of Scripture hath given us a particular Account of those extraordinary Abilities, which the Divine Goodness had endow'd him with in order to qualify him for the great business of Government, and to make him useful, and instrumental in Instructing and Reforming the Manners of the World by his Writings, as well, as by his civil Authority. For God gave *Solomon* Wisdom and Understanding exceeding much, and Largeness of Heart even as the Sand, that is on the Sea Shore: And *Solomon's* Wisdom excell'd the Wisdom of all the Children of the East Country, and

all the Wisdom of Egypt; none of the Eastern Sages, none of the celebrated Masters of Philosophy in *Egypt* were comparable to this Princely and Divine Philosopher.

The great Depth of his Understanding did not only appear in the wise Distribution of Justice, and Governing the People committed to his Care, but his Knowledge was most comprehensive and universal, not confin'd to one particular Science, but it extended it self to all. *He spake of Trees from the Cedar Tree, that is in Lebanon, even unto the Hyssop, that springeth out of the Wall; he spake also of Beasts, and of Fowls, and of Creeping Things, and of Fishes.* His Fame like the Sun Beams diffus'd it self from East to West, for *there came of all People to hear the Wisdom of Solomon, from all Kings of the Earth which had heard of his Wisdom.* Thus hath the Holy Spirit given us an Account of his Wisdom, to dispose us more readily to embrace his Doctrines and to give ear to the Sacred Truths, which he hath taught us. And amongst the many admirable Proverbs deliver'd by him for Regulating the Conduct, and Government of humane Life in several Circumstances, and Conditions, there is none one that seems to be of a more important Concern, and Advantage to Men in all Ages of the World, and to conduce more to the Preservation of our Happiness, Peace, and Welfare, and the Securing of the Divine Favour, and Blessing, than this express'd in the Words of the Text, *My Son fear thou the Lord and the King, and meddle not with them that are given to change.* Now this Prohibition of Meddling with such Persons is of a large and comprehensive Signification, and im-

Sages, that we should not in any Respect countenance, or approve of the Principles of such Men, nor join our selves with them in their Practices, but on the contrary that we should upon all Occasions declare our Abhorrence of them. And in order to induce us to the Observation of this I propose to treat of the Words in the following Method.

FIRST, I shall endeavour to shew, who are the Persons that are describ'd to us in the Text by the Character of *them that are given to change*.

SECONDLY, I shall represent to you the Wickedness, and pernicious Nature of the Principles, and Practices of these Men.

And LASTLY, I shall conclude with an Application of the whole.

And FIRST, I shall endeavour to shew, who are the Persons, that are describ'd to us in the Text by the Character of *them that are given to change*, and these according to the natural Interpretation of the Words are Persons of Turbulent, Factionous, and Seditious Tempers, Men, that are wavering and indifferent in Matters of Religion, and of dangerous, and unsettled Principles with respect to Government, that are not willing to obey any longer, than they can promote their own Interests, and Designs, that are ready upon every Occasion to raise Commotions in the State, and to hazard the publick Good to gratify their Ambition. As for God, these Men

Men fear him not, and so we cannot expect, that they should have any Reverence, or Dread of his Vicegerent, when they are in Hopes of Escaping with Impunity for their Crimes; their Godliness is Gain, and those Principles, which perhaps they seem zealous for to day, they will shift, and put off to morrow. They turn Religion into Rebellion, and Faith into Faction, and sanctifie every Thing, how wicked soever, that will but serve a Turn, *despise Dominions, and speak evil of Dignities*: they are *like the Waves of the Sea driven about, and toss'd with every Wind* double minded Men, *unstable in all their Ways*. And that we may see those Men in a clearer Light let us but take a short View of the Principles and Practices of those Persons, that were instrumental, and concern'd in Bringing about the horrid Fact of this Day. And these were Men of the most implacable, and hellish Dispositions and yet disguis'd their black Designs under a Pretence of Acting for Conscience, and Religion. No Compliance, or Condescension on the Kings Part would serve to redress their Grievances they aim'd at Nothing less than a total Subversion of the Government, which they call'd a Thorough Reformation, and in order to accomplish this wicked Design they were furnish'd with the most rebellious, unchristian Principles. Episcopacy, though instituted by the blessed Apostle in all the Churches planted by them, and if not essential to the Being, yet certainly requisite to the perfection of a Church, was condemn'd by them as Popery: our Liturgy, the Best no doubt in the whole World, because most like to the

sed in the first Ages, our grave and decent Ce-
 remonies, were all esteem'd Foppery, and Su-
 perstition with them, and Monarchy was Tyran-
 ny. With these and such like vile Notions they
 poison'd the Minds of People, and prepar'd them
 to digest the most shocking Villanies: the Best
 of Kings fell a Sacrifice to their merciless Rage,
the Breath of our Nostrils, the Anointed of the Lord
was taken in their Pits, and the total Subversion
 of all our Laws follow'd of course. And when
 they had proceeded thus far, they were yet un-
 easy, the same murmuring rebellious *Israelites*
 still, they could never establish themselves up-
 on any durable Foundation, never agree in the
 same Sentiments, constant in Nothing, but in
 being given to change, giddy with Error, and
 every Day advancing new Schemes of Govern-
 ment. All which is a plain Argument, that
 when Men have once departed from the good
 old Constitution, they can never be settled, and
 well compos'd, 'till Divine Providence restores
 to them their ancient Laws, and determines
 Bounds to their Rage. These then are *they that*
are given to change, Men of turbulent, and un-
 quiet Spirits, that are not easy in the best of
 Reigns, nor satisfied with the wisest Constitu-
 tion, they are as so many ill Humours, that
 work every Thing into Ferment, Libertines in
 principle, and Rebels in Practice. And now I
 proceed Secondly to shew the Wickedness and
 pernicious Nature of the Principles, and Pra-
 ctices of these Men.

AND this will appear First by Considering that
 all turbulent, seditious, and rebellious Princi-
 ples

ples are most opposite, and irreconcilable to the
 Precepts and Doctrines of our Holy Religion.
 For Christ came into the World not only to re-
 concile Men to God, but to reconcile them to
 one another, to promote an universal good Will,
 to discountenance all Fierceness and Rage, and
 to beget a peaceable Disposition in Persons of
 the most distant Tempers: his Design was to ba-
 nish all ill natur'd unsociable Principles, and to
 introduce Peace, Unity, and Order amongst all
 People. For as we have the greatest Instance of
 the Divine Goodness, and Mercy towards Man-
 kind represented to us in the Gospel by *Sending*
his only Son into the World for our Sakes; so we
 are oblig'd by the same to make the Divine Good-
 ness the Rule, and Pattern of our Behaviour to-
 wards our fellow Creatures: we are not to in-
 dulse our selves in the brutish Passions of Ma-
 lice, or Hatred, we are not to revenge our own
 Quarrels, but to leave it to *the most High, to whom*
Vengeance belongeth. And the great Excellency of
 the Christian Religion appears particularly in
 this, that it is calculated for the Welfare and
 Happiness of civil Society above all other Reli-
 gions, that ever were in the World. It enjoins
 the Practice of all those Virtues, which are the
 Ornament and Support of Government; it's Law
 command Obedience to the higher Powers upon
 the Penalty of eternal Damnation; we are
 not only to submit out of Fear of the *Sworn*
which they bear, but for Conscience sake, considering
 that *they are ordain'd of God,* and that the Almighty
 is in a peculiar Manner concern'd to vindicate
 their injur'd Honour as being his Representatives

tentatives, and Vicegerents on Earth. And accordingly the primitive Writers endeavour'd to recommend the Christian Religion to Heathen Princes upon this very Account, because it conduc'd to make the best Subjects. *Tertullian* in his Apology particularly insists upon this Matter, and shews, how the Principles of Christianity were fram'd for the Welfare of Society, and informs us, that there was never any Tumult, or Rebellion rais'd against the *Roman* Governours by the *Christians*. Though they were dispers'd throughout all Parts of their Dominions, and were very formidable in their Numbers, yet were they never convicted of forming any seditious Cabals, or entring into any rebellious Conspiracy; their Principle was to pay a cheerful Obedience to those Powers which the Providence of God had plac'd over them, their Religion taught them to pray for *Kings and for all in Authority*, that they might *lead a quiet and peaceable Life in all Goodness and Honesty*. And the Church of *England*, which, God be thank'd, is reform'd after the Pattern of the primitive Ages, discountenances all Rebellion in her Homilies, and disowns them that are guilty of it, for her Sons and Members, and accordingly keeps this Day in Memory, to the Shame, and Confusion of those, who pleaded Religion for Rebellion, and committed the most atrocious Villanies under the Pretence of Conscience.

And the Impiety, and pernicious Nature of these Men's Principles, and Practices will farther appear Secondly by Considering the sad Consequences,

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quences,

quences, and Effects of them, and the Miseries, which they bring upon any Nation or People.

Peace and Unity are the great Bands, and only Support of civil Society, the Nerves, as it were, which communicate Health and Strength to it, and by which it flourishes, and subsists; but Rebellion in the Body politick, is like a Fever in the natural one, which works every thing into Disorder, and Confusion, and if not timely prevented, and suppress'd, endangers the whole Constitution. The most powerful Kingdoms, and stately Empires have fall'n a Sacrifice to this; this it was which weaken'd and sully'd the Roman Greatness: for whilst their Armies triumph'd abroad, and their brave Generals shin'd in distant Fields of Battle, they were torn in Pieces by civil Diffensions at home. And we need not I think, go so far back in Time as this, to find out Instances of this Nature: whoever reads our History from 1641 to the black and dismal Year of 1648, must easily discern the sad Consequences and Effects of Rebellion. It is very amazing indeed to think, with what Rage and Frenzy the Actors of it were inspir'd, and to what an exceeding Height of Madness they were at length transported. Good God! how does it astonish us to think, that a most wise, pious, and merciful Prince should be in a formal Manner, try'd, condemn'd and executed by his own Subjects, that they should sit as Judges of their King, and pass Sentence against him! I believe, from the Foundation of the World to that Day, there was not the like Instance in any Age or Countrey. And wh

Pen can describe to you the Calamities, and Desolation, which attended this wretched, and unnatural Rebellion? The Best of Governments was ruin'd, the most Primitive and Apostolical Church was laid in Ashes, and our *Temples* were converted into *Dens of Thieves*: there was no Distinction of Right or Wrong, no Property, Laws, or Justice, observ'd: no one can sufficiently conceive the Horror, and Sting of these Miseries, but they that felt them. And indeed the many Evils and Calamities of that wicked Rebellion were not only confin'd to the Age, in which it was transacted, but are in some measure entail'd upon us their late Posterity. For the Seeds of Discord, and Sedition which were then sown, the loose Notions, and Principles in Religion, which were then publish'd, Length of Time cannot wholly yet extinguish: *our Fathers sinn'd, and are not, and we have born their Iniquities*, we feel the Punishment of them in our own unhappy Divisions. And indeed their Crimes were so exceedingly heinous, and provoking, that we cannot expect to avert those heavy Judgments of God, which hang over our Heads upon that Account any other Way, than by a sincere Abhorrence of their Principles, and Practices, and by Living in a steady Loyalty, and Obedience to his present Majesty: and this brings me in the last Place to make some application of the whole, and earnestly to exhort you to *fear the Lord and the King, and not to meddle with them that are given to change.*

And Advice of this Nature can never be more reasonable, and proper than at this Juncture of

Time, when there is an open Rebellion rais'd against the Government, and headed by him who assumes to himself the Title of King of these Realms, and when it is the Duty of every well Wisser to the Constitution in Church, and State to declare his Abhorrence of it; and to represent to all People the sad Consequences of it, if it should ever be attended with Success, which God of his Mercy prevent. For what can we expect, if ever a Popish Prince should be seated on the Throne? nothing surely but certain Ruin: can any one suppose, that he should maintain the Church of *England*, who is under all possible Obligations to destroy it, who by Principle, and Interest is bound to extirpate Heresy? Have not we of this Nation had sufficient Experience of the Mercies of Popish Princes? Has not our Church always suffer'd from them? But this is our Folly to be insensible of former Calamities, and unmindful of the present Mercies, which we enjoy. For a great Mercy surely it is, to see the Succession in that illustrious House, where our wise Legislators plac'd it for our Preservation, to have a King upon the Throne who has oblig'd himself in the most solemn Manner to preserve our Constitution, and who in his gracious Speeches has given us undeniable Assurances of it, and who is blessed with a Royal Issue to transmit it safe to Posterity. What remains then for us to do, but to express our Thankfulness to Heaven for these Mercies, by Exercising those Principles of Loyalty, and Obedience, which are the peculiar, and distinguishing Marks of our Holy Religion? It is

now high Time for us to lay aside all our private Animosities, and those Jesuitical Distinctions which were contriv'd on purpose to serve the Cause of Popery, and to be united in our common Endeavours for the publick Good. We live under the best of Governments; we have the most pure Church in the whole World free from all Popish Errors, and human Inventions; we profess to believe no other Creed, no other Articles of Faith, than what were *deliver'd to the Saints*, and receiv'd by the whole Primitive Church, as most evidently appears from the Writings of *Ignatius, Justin Martyr, Irenæus*, and many Others: And let us then demonstrate our selves true Lovers of it, and true Churchmen by Maintaining and Defending the just, and rightful Title of our gracious Sovereign against all Popish Conspirators. These Persons ever since the Daies of our happy Reformation have been endeavouring to bring us again into our old Bondage, and now endeavouring to see our Religion, and Liberties secur'd to us in the present Royal Family, are making their last Efforts, and Attempts against us, knowing, that if they are now disappointed, their Hopes will grow desperate, and vanish. And we trust, that the same good Providence, which hath hitherto watch'd over us, will still continue to preserve us, if we are not wanting in our own Endeavours, and if we do not provoke God to withdraw his Protection by our Sins, and Divisions, and by Neglecting to mind *the things that belong to Peace*. For how can we reasonably expect the Divine Blessing upon us, whilst we are so divided

vided among our selves, whilst Envy, Hatred, and Malice, reign with us, and we sacrifice our Conscience to our Interest, and Ambition? The best way would be to dispute less about Religion, and practice it more; to exercise those substantial Parts of it, *Faith* and *Repentance*; to love God in earnest, and our Neighbour for his Sake; to discharge our Duty quietly in our several Capacities, and to *subject our selves in all Humility* to those Powers, which Divine Providence has appointed to rule over us. For Rebellion is a Sin, which is punish'd with heavy Judgments in this World and if we continue in the Sin of our Forefathers we must expect to smart severely for their, and our own Iniquity. This Day, one would think should teach us to abhor all rebellious Practices and to detest the Authors and Instruments of them, if we did but look back, and consider the miserable Calamities, which the Nation suffer by it, and should prevail with every one to have no other Interest, and Ambition but this, which should distinguish himself most by his Loyalty and Obedience, and by Defending, and Maintaining our most excellent Constitution in Church and State against all it's Enemies. Let our present Danger be a Means to unite us, and to inspire us with Zeal and Courage in Defence of the common Cause, and let us endeavour to obtain the Divine Favour by Breaking off our Sin by Repentance. Our King left his native Dominions, and came over on purpose to preserve us, and we can only promise to our selves a lasting Security of our Religion, and Liberties

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him and his Issue. Let us therefore with one Heart pray to God to continue his gracious Protection over the whole Royal Family, and to grant to our Gracious Sovereign King GEORGE a long, and a happy Reign over us, to strengthen him that he may vanquish and overcome all his Enemies, and that finally after this Life he may attain everlasting Joy and Felicity through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Now to God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost, three Persons and one God, be all Honour, Praise, and Thanksgiving both now and for evermore, Amen.

F I N I S.

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